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ABSTRACT

Adult education program designs are described for four institutions: Mary Baldwin College, Loretto Heights College, the Vermont State Colleges, and Clark University. A network formed among these institutions serving as a mutual support system by which research and literature could be exchanged. Four common premises developed: (1) the decision to return to school is a major step in an adult's life; (2) adults often seek more from their return to education than further accumulation of knowledge or technical training; (3) in order to respond to adult's needs, institutions must make changes in curriculum, teaching, and administration; and (4) for adult programs to flourish, a strong institutional commitment is needed. Three major areas are examined. Administration and Institutional Integration discusses creating a congruity of purpose, balancing integration and autonomy, and financial feasibility. Curriculum and Program Design examines developing a purpose, adults as students, the learning process, and curriculum models. Adult Development focuses on enrollment and adult development. Provided within each area for consideration are the individual institution's program response. Institutional addresses and contact persons are provided. (LC)

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Designing for Development:

FOUR PROGRAMS FOR ADULT UNDERGRADUATES

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
EDUCATION & WELFARE
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EDUCATION

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A Working Report of Programs at:

Clark University
Loretto Heights College
Mary Baldwin College
Vermont State Colleges

Sponsored in Part by the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, Department of Health, Education and Welfare

HE 012 287

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Introduction

A growing realization during the last decade of the importance of adult education has led to the development and implementation of innovative programs to serve adult learners across the country. The primary achievement of these programs has been increased accessibility for adults to postsecondary education. This has been accomplished through new forms of delivering resources such as creating off-campus learning centers and developing procedures to award credit for learning achieved through life experience. However, with the exception of programs such as those at Goddard College, at various centers of the University Without Walls, at Empire State College, or the DePaul School for New Learning, scant attention has been paid to the actual improvement of the teaching and learning process for adults, particularly as distinguished from what is known about teaching and learning for traditional 18-22-year-old students. Perhaps this phenomenon can be explained most easily by the fact that we as a nation are only just beginning to recognize that adults are not stagnating individuals fully formed in their early twenties; rather they are persons with constantly changing needs, goals and outlooks. Why then do we expect postsecondary education to have shown more foresight?

It was, therefore, with anticipation that in the summer of 1977 the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education was able to make grants to four institutions — Mary Baldwin College, Loretto Heights College, the Vermont State Colleges, and Clark University — which shared the common goal of designing specific educational programs for adults and which planned to use adult development research and literature as a primary source for their program design. Because of this mutual interest, the Fund proposed that the four projects work together. A network was formed among the four institutions with Rita Weathersby and Jill Mattuck Tarule participating as consultants and network coordinators. The purposes of the network have been to provide mutual support in this endeavor, to provide an opportunity for the network members to share and learn from available research and data in the field, including data collected from their own programs and students, and to make knowledge and insights gained from the projects available to the public.

Finding an appropriate mode for dissemination has been a challenging task because the network represents committed attempts at four very different institutions. The task was to create programs which respond appropriately to adults' needs and each institution's history, and not a series of planned variations of the typical research mode from which data could be systematically gleaned. And yet, if one is to consider how to change the face of postsecondary education so that adults are taken seriously, these projects represent a small microcosm of what is possible in postsecondary education

— as such, they warrant serious attention. We have designed this report as an overview using the four projects as sources. In so doing, we have been careful not to talk just about theory and curriculum, but also to discuss implementation strategies, for it is in implementation that theory and practice converge.

Although differences in the four institutions and their programs may seem paramount upon first consideration, working together has created a dialogue in which common basic premises have become evident. These premises are that:

1. The decision to return to school is a major step in an adult's life. The daily lives of adults are complex, consisting of many demanding responsibilities; the additional burden of study cannot lightly be assumed.

2. Adults often seek more from their return to education than further accumulation of knowledge or technical training. Quite often, in fact, at the time of re-enrollment they are undergoing a major change in life perspective. Research on adulthood can help us to understand this phenomenon and suggest constructive ways in which to respond.

3. In order for educational programs to respond to adults' needs, institutions must often make major changes in curriculum, teaching methodologies, advising, and administrative arrangements.

4. In order for a responsive program for adults to flourish, a strong institutional commitment is needed. Faculty, administration and staff may need to rethink their attitudes about students, the nature of teaching and learning, and the societal mission of colleges and universities.

The programs presented in this monograph have utilized various models to reach out to adult learners and offer them more than just prescribed fields of study. It is hoped that aspects of these unique programs will be helpful to other institutions in designing educational programs for adults which meet the increasing demand. We will describe three areas which require consideration in meeting the special needs of this segment of students: Administration, Curriculum and Program Design, and Adult Development. These are areas of vital importance which should assist administrators and planners of adult programs in finding the appropriate design to suit their institution and meet the needs of the wider social community.

Carol Stoel
Program Officer,
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Postsecondary Education

Designing for Development: Four Programs for Adult Undergraduates

I. Administration and Institutional Integration

Institutions which initiate and support adult programs must often create administrative arrangements which stretch the host institution's existing (and comfortable) roles, rules, requirements, and assumptions. The new programs need to be integrated into the on-going institution in ways that enhance both the program and the institution. There are at least three areas in which integration is important: reconciling a new program's objectives with the institution's mission, balancing integration and autonomy in administrative arrangements, and creating a feasible financial structure. Each program addressed these issues in a manner consistent with the history and character of the institution. What follows are brief descriptions of how each program evolved. These descriptions highlight some of the administrative issues which arise when programs focused on a new population are created within existing institutions of higher education.

Creating a Congruity of Purpose

Colleges and universities will increasingly serve adults in the next twenty years, and therefore must organize and develop special programs to serve adult learners adequately. Institutions must make a commitment to the adult learner, reconcile its corporate mission with the mission of the adult programs, and provide for their implementation. This is a basic and fundamental assumption. Thus, in program development, one major initial assumption involves creating a congruence of purpose between the objectives of the new program and the institution's current and historical character. The following explains how each of the four projects grappled with this issue.

Project Transition, *at Loretto Heights College in the University Without Walls: a program for re-entry adults prior to admission.*

During the 1960s, as Loretto Heights College was changing from a Catholic women's college to an independent institution serving both men and women, the need to develop new programs was recognized. In 1971, the University Without Walls (UWW) program serving a diversity of students was established as a regular program of the College. The UWW was designed to provide an individualized approach to the BA degree, using a mix of both on and off campus learning resources, in a wide variety of areas of concentration and serving highly self-directed adult learners.

By 1976, the college's mission statements and organizational designs assumed the inclusion of the adult learner and the UWW program within the college community. Our experience with several hundred UWW

graduates and increasing numbers of women returning to college often with little previous college or work experience, prompted the design of Project Transition to serve the needs of re-entering adults – before they decided to apply for a bachelor's degree program.

Project Transition responds to adults' needs for adequate time to become oriented to the UWW processes and re-oriented to college, to receive group support, and to focus their individual career interests and goals. The project has attracted new populations: 1) those persons not sufficiently self-confident or clear about objectives to satisfactorily complete the demanding application required of UWW bachelor's degree candidates; 2) small groups of persons employed by or associated with the same business or organization; and 3) other individuals seeking short-term, inexpensive, and in-depth experiences to help them in personal problem-solving, career planning and career focus. Project Transition is an example of the flexibility of an institution which made it possible to respond quickly and effectively to a new group of adults with special needs.

Learning Support Project, *at Clark University in the College of Professional and Continuing Education: a seminar sequence to support a flexible credit portfolio project relating life experience to academic disciplines.*

Clark University is a small liberal arts university offering the bachelor's degree and a wide range of research-oriented and professional graduate programs. Through a long tradition of scholarly research the university has become a community of inquiry. The college of Professional and Continuing Education (COPACE) is a program for adults seeking to further their education by drawing on the resources provided in such a setting. COPACE offers professional training and a liberal arts degree at both the bachelor's and master's degree levels.

The Learning Support Project, which is offered through COPACE, enables students to participate in a two-semester sequence of seminars in which they learn to reflectively examine knowledge gained through their life experience for the purpose of integrating it with their academic studies. Each student in the project develops a portfolio documenting the integration of a selected experience with knowledge in a relevant discipline. In this process the students receive guidance from faculty mentors whom they select to provide expertise on the portfolio topic. Credit for the portfolio is variable and is determined by a contract between the student and the mentor. Examples of portfolio topics include a sociological analysis of the effects of mobility on corporate executives and their families, a dramatic presentation on change across generations, a series of vignettes on career change interpreted in psychological perspective, and reflections on experience synthesized in a photographic essay with accompanying poetry.

Preparation of a portfolio provides a unique opportunity for sustained academic inquiry into a topic that the student has identified as an important part of his or her life. This aspect of the project is consistent with the scholarly tradition at Clark. We also find that students who complete portfolios develop new insights into themselves and they usually experience an increase in self-confidence and commitment to

their academic program. The project can provide a perspective that allows students to see relationships between their life experiences, their academic studies and their future goals. In this regard it makes the scholarly tradition relevant to the needs of adults as lifelong learners.

Adult Degree Program, *at Mary Baldwin College: an external degree program offering varied study opportunities to adults.*

Mary Baldwin College has traditionally been a liberal arts college for women undergraduates aged 18-22. Now Mary Baldwin College defines its mission as meeting the educational needs of women regardless of age and has done so by enabling adult women (and men) to earn the bachelor of arts degree. The college thereby more broadly fulfills its original mission and extends opportunities for higher education and benefits to a portion of the population which has not been adequately served. The college recognizes that the changing role of women has created problems and challenges for individuals, institutions and society. These problems demand new and alternative approaches to educational delivery systems in order to make higher education accessible and effective for mature adults.

Vermont State Colleges External Degree Program, *a multi-institutional, cooperative program: includes public and private colleges, and builds on the state's community college system.*

The Vermont External Degree Program is unusual in that it is an attempt at creating a cooperative, multi-institutional program involving both public and private institutions. Initially, the external degree is being developed at three institutions with distinctly different characteristics and views of this institutional mission. Although all three institutions wish to serve adult learners, each institution meets this overall objective in a different way.

One institution perceives the adult student as one of its own and wishes to integrate the older students into the regular campus life. Another has begun to develop "Centers" away from the regular campus and nearer to the homes of rural adults. The third strives to increase the involvement of the regular faculty with the adult learners. Previous to this project, two institutions were already serving adults; in them the External Degree Program represents an expansion of offerings. The third perceives the External Degree Program as a significant first step toward serving adults.

One concern arising from this diversity of arrangements is the difficulty distinguishing between those students who are willing and able to follow the standard requirements and those students who require a more flexible program. "Adult" is most often thought of as an age range. As long as persons of each age are represented, then the mission of serving adults appears to have been fulfilled. This appearance, however, may be deceptive. Students within particular life phases or stages of development might not be enrolled at all. That is, a program designed for the broad category "adults," or even a specified group such as "rural adults," may be appropriate for only a small subset of that group. The parameters of the smaller set are unknown, but intriguing to us as we design this external degree program.

Balancing Integration and Autonomy

New programs for adults are seriously hindered when they are viewed as competitive with other programs within the institution. They are usually significantly different and as the "new kid on the block" they face issues of inclusion versus exclusion and acceptance versus rejection. In addition, they risk the appearance of being tacked on to existing programs and having low institutional priority. These issues influence administrative and managerial decisions. Some separation from the previous organizational structures insures that adults will be served appropriately. But provision must also be made for flexible interaction and collaboration with other systems and offices in the institution so that appropriate decisions are reached in important areas ranging from parking rules to curriculum design.

Thus, balances must be achieved — between the autonomy of the program and its integration in the institution, between internal program elements (for example, clusters or centers) and centralized program control. As program personnel are able to develop collaborative relationships within the program and with the institution, they begin to reflect the collaborative learning and teaching values which are essential to programs for adults.

Project Transition, *at Loretto Heights College: a special project within the University Without Walls.*

Project Transition is a Special Project of the UWW Program. The Project Transition Director has independence to develop the project, within the proposal and funding agency guidelines. The Project Transition Director reports directly to the UWW Program Director, who reports to the Academic Dean. Articulation of the Project within the UWW Program is continuous and involves each UWW procedure. In this sense, Project Transition is a particular adaptation, refinement, and simplification of the UWW process, primarily utilized as a pre-entry experience prior to enrollment in UWW. The Project is generally viewed positively as an effective way of serving a new population of adult learners, both broadening and deepening the College's role in adult development and adult education.

Approvals in the areas of budget, public relations, personnel, and curriculum follow the procedures of both UWW and the college. For example:

1) The Project Transition special student application process poses no problems for the Admissions Office. Course descriptions for Project Transition are written for the college catalogue, the Veterans Administration, and the Registrar's Office. Regular UWW Transcript supplements are prepared for Project Transition students, and the official UWW transcript is used for recording the students' credits. Registration dates are coordinated with UWW and college registrations in the fall, spring, and summer.

2) The College Business Office provides fiscal services for the project. Regular requisition systems for agency funds are used. However, many forms of financial aid are not available to Project Transition Special Students.

3) The Student Services Division of the college is available if needed.

One counselor has served Project Transition as a member of a research task force. Individual testing has been done by outside consultants, employed part-time by the project itself.

There are explicit and on-going efforts to keep an appropriate balance between the autonomy of the project and its integration into the UWW program structure. All persons involved value collaborativeness as a management style, and also recognize the need for accountability. Personal needs of the staff and the students are respected, keeping the project's objectives and resources in mind.

A demonstration model strategy for change is being utilized, with the goal of the project being evolution and growth into an on-going offering of the UWW program. In the future, other students at Loretto Heights College may find the project useful and other programs may view it as acceptable to meet some of their needs. It also holds implications for faculty development and non-credit continuing education.

Learning Support Project, *at Clark University in the College of Professional and Continuing Education: a seminar sequence with individual student portfolio projects.*

The Learning Support Project is a cluster of seminars and independent student portfolio projects. Work in the seminars and with the portfolio projects is coordinated by seminar leaders who work as a collaborative team. The seminar leaders ensure that the seminars maintain a flexible response to the wide variety of student learning needs, and they coordinate working relationships between students and faculty mentors. Use of the team approach is consistent with other course clusters and team teaching activities at Clark.

The seminars are offered and credited as part of the standard course offerings in COPACE. Credit for the portfolio is determined by a contract between the student and mentor. Students do not register or pay for the portfolio credit until they complete the work outlined in the contract. Portfolio crediting procedures and the relationship of the project to the rest of COPACE are coordinated through the office of the Dean of COPACE.

Adult Degree Program, *at Mary Baldwin College: an academic program utilizing existing faculty in key roles.*

Organizationally, the Mary Baldwin Adult Degree Program is an academic program reporting directly to the Dean of the College. The program promotes full utilization of existing physical and human resources and is not competitive with any other existing program in the college.

Approximately ninety percent of the Mary Baldwin faculty have worked with adult students as faculty advisors, teacher/tutors, or assessors of prior learning credit portfolios. Faculty members are paid for the work with ADP students since it is not considered part of their full-time faculty load. A plan is being developed to allow individual members of the faculty to work with ADP students as part of their full-time responsibilities. Faculty selections will be based on eagerness to work with adults and experience with the program.

Faculty interest and involvement with the adult students is high and cooperation with ADP has been and continues to be positive and supportive.

Change is constant; therefore flexibility of staff is essential. The Director of the Program was selected from among the faculty. She was given the opportunity to study other adult programs and develop one appropriate to the college and expected students. She received a very high level of support from the President and other administrative officers.

The management style is collaborative and strives to support and facilitate all levels of college administration. The Dean of the College selects a committee from the faculty to serve as advisor to the program and Program Director, as feedback channels, as a policy-sounding board for the director, and as a degree-plan approval committee for ADP students. Frequent reports, both written and oral, are given to faculty, staff, alumnae and board regarding program and individual student progress.

Vermont State Colleges External Degree Program, *a multi-institutional cooperative program: external programs given academic autonomy.*

Although procedures vary among the campuses, the operating principle is that academic functions rest with the autonomous office of external programs, while administrative support is provided by each campus.

Academic Functions

1) The degree is labeled Vermont State Colleges rather than with the name of the participating campus.

2) The External Degree Program Director functions as academic dean; developing academic guidelines in accordance with campus requirements, training mentors, and chairing a two-tiered academic committee structure.

3) Degree plans and learning contracts are reviewed by committees of mentors, regular campus faculty, and program administrators.

4) Mentors are hired and evaluated by the External Degree Program Director in consultation with the administering campus.

5) Interpretation of formal degree requirements rests initially with the mentor who recommends to the academic review committee. The External Degree Program maintains original copies of all student academic records.

Administrative Functions

1) The Continuing Education Division of the campus provides administrative support to mentors and maintains a full set of academic records.

2) The Business Office of each campus handles student billing and pays mentors and tutors.

3) The Registrar registers students and maintains student records, accepting academic recommendations from the academic review committees.

4) Admissions and financial aid are handled by the appropriate campus offices.

As might be expected, there have been communications problems between the External Degree Program and the campuses. It has been of value, however, to encourage the campus administration to think of the External Degree Program as they would a department and mentors as faculty. This has helped to provide a useful, if not entirely accurate, analogy.

Developing Financial Feasibility

Another area of difference between conventional programs and new programs for adults is in the financial arrangements which sustain the adult program on an on-going basis. Although the adult population is potentially a large market, rising student costs, financial aid policies, and traditional attitudes still prevent most institutions from responding with appropriately adjusted fee structures. Adult programs require many human resources. Despite the possibility of special arrangements, the higher the level of individualization, the higher will be the costs of administration and support services.

Adult programs do have the potential to attract new students and new revenues. But often they must be given adequate initial financial support until such time that they generate sufficient sources of income on their own. Although these programs should not be viewed as survival insurance or money-makers for institutions, they also cannot be a drain on the already stretched resources of the institution. Thus, the challenge for each program is to create a financial structure which allows it to evolve without draining institutional resources. The following demonstrates some of the ways in which financial problems were handled.

Project Transition, *at Loretto Heights College in the University Without Walls: reduced tuition hopefully recovered through increased enrollment.*

A major challenge to Project Transition is its self-sufficiency. The College supported the early developmental costs, a pilot seminar and the proposal preparation. The FIPSE grant partially supports the project.

The Project charges an alternative tuition ($200) and grants 6 semester credits over four months or one semester (compared with the usual charge of $105/credit). The $200 tuition is competitive with public colleges and universities in the area in an effort to remove tuition cost differences as a selection criterion for students.

Further, since all Project Transition students are special students and receive a different level of service than degree candidates, there is a rationale for the reduced tuition. Each year, the college assumes greater proportions of the budget. The goal is to build the student volume to provide sufficient income to continue the project after the funding period. This is a major challenge if the project is to maintain a reduced tuition.

This Project is not expected to make money. It is hoped that it can break even, with a tuition reduction, and maintain its quality and outreach beyond the grant period. The Project functions for some students as a contained and total learning experience; it functions for

others as a recruitment and pre-entry process for UWW and other college programs. These are valuable functions. Efforts will be made to increase the financial viability of the project and maintain it as an on-going offering of the University Without Walls.

Learning Support Project, *at Clark University in the College of Professional and Continuing Education: flexibly adjusted fees for variable credit.*

The Learning Support Project is designed to run on a break-even basis. Students pay standard tuition for the seminars. Students currently pay half the standard fee for the credit they earn through the portfolio process. The portfolio credit fees form a pool used to pay an honorarium to the mentors of students who complete their portfolios. This pool is also used to pay seminar leaders a stipend of fifty percent above the standard fee for teaching a seminar in order to compensate seminar leaders for the additional work of coordinating students' portfolio projects.

The fee charged for portfolio credit is adjusted each year to accommodate changes in the average number of credits earned by students and changes in the cost of running the project.

While it does not generate surplus revenue for the College of Professional and Continuing Education, the project is considered to be an attraction that draws students who might not otherwise enroll.

Adult Degree Program, *at Mary Baldwin College: students' fees reflect the actual costs of services.*

The Mary Baldwin Program was designed to be self-supporting through a carefully planned growth pattern. Part of the pattern includes making full use of existing faculty and college resources when advisable. Start-up money was obtained through the FIPSE grant which provided the initial financial support necessary for staff and training.

All students are charged an annual tuition fee reflecting the academic advising service and administrative costs. In addition to this fee, students pay the real cost of each learning experience directly to the source, i.e., course enrollment fees, tutorial fees, correspondence fees, or continuing education fees. Because of this course structure, fees vary with methods of study and with full- or part-time enrollment.

Financial aid sources for students are being expanded and the college has received several private grants earmarked for adult women returning to college preparing for or changing careers.

Vermont State Colleges External Degree Program, *a multi-institutional cooperative program: FIPSE funds used for central start-up costs which will later be shared by participating institutions.*

Start-up costs provided by FIPSE supported the External Degree Program's central office and initial mentor costs at the institutions for the first year. Over the subsequent two years of the FIPSE grant, costs are to be assumed by the institutions, so that upon completion of the grant the central office will be supported by shared contributions from the participating institutions.

Students pay a minimum flat rate for part-time study which is

graduated to full-time study in accord with per credit fees current on the respective campuses. Although the program was initially conceived to include no additional student fees, a separate charge for mentoring is currently under consideration.

Although continuing education is frequently viewed as a money-maker, because the External Degree Program views its mission at least in part as one of extending access to rural adults in a poor state, we feel that it is imperative to keep fees at least as low as those for in-state adolescents. Whether this can be done is yet to be seen, for although the need to establish priorities is economic, the process of establishing those priorities is manifestly political.

II. Curriculum and Program Design

A curriculum designed for adults is composed of various combinations of students, staff and instructional settings. Despite our different program models, we hold surprisingly common assumptions about the nature of the learning process for adults and essential elements of program design. This chapter presents those views and a description of the curriculum model in each program.

Articulating a Developmental Purpose

We assume that the purpose of educational institutions is to support the development and learning of individuals throughout their lifetimes. Participants in a complex society constantly acquire new knowledge and skills, but as educators we also assume that each one of us is engaged in a life-span developmental process in which we experience alterations in our view of ourselves and our relationships to others and the world around us. In this sense there is a difference between education considered as an additive experience, and education considered as a process of qualitative change. These qualitative changes have been called "perspective transformations" by Jack Mezirow in a recent issue of *Adult Education* (1978). We believe with Mezirow that "reformulations of the criteria for valuing and taking action" are central to a person's growth as a lifelong learner. Our programs are designed both to add to an individual's accumulation of factual knowledge and intellectual skill and to facilitate perspective transformation as an integral part of an individual's educational experience.

Perspective transformations occur when new experiences and questions promote a critical reexamination of existing habits of action and thought. Because these changes in the way we view ourselves challenge our existing beliefs, they are seen as risks. Undergoing perspective transformations, we seek supports that enable us to explore new relationships which we are beginning to perceive on our own terms. A community of learners becomes

important as do relationships with mentors and advisors and other resource persons.

Because our purpose is to support a lifelong developmental process, we think of the curriculum itself as a dynamic organization. The pattern of the curriculum at any moment will represent the best match of student needs with institutional resources. However, over time, the curriculum is best thought of as a structure that is continually being built through the joint action of the students and program staff.

The curriculum promotes perspective transformation by mediating the relationship between the individual and the environment. At best, it creates an "optimal incongruity" or tension between the two, and it provides a forum in which the student can explore that tension. It allows the student to integrate knowledge gained from practical and life experiences with knowledge gained through academic pursuits.

Adults as Students

Adults are engaged in a lifelong developmental process in which they experience changes in their views of self and their relationships to others in the world. For some students, these changes are aptly described by principles embodied in classical developmental stage theories. When this is apparent, the curriculum appears to support students as they push the limits of their current modes of thinking, and to promote movement from one stage of development to the next. For other students whose changes appear to be adaptive responses to particular learning contexts, whether job or life-situation related, the curriculum creates an environment that helps each student develop a personally-relevant repertoire of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values. In either situation, students have the potential for experiencing perspective transformation, or changes in their level or style of functioning.

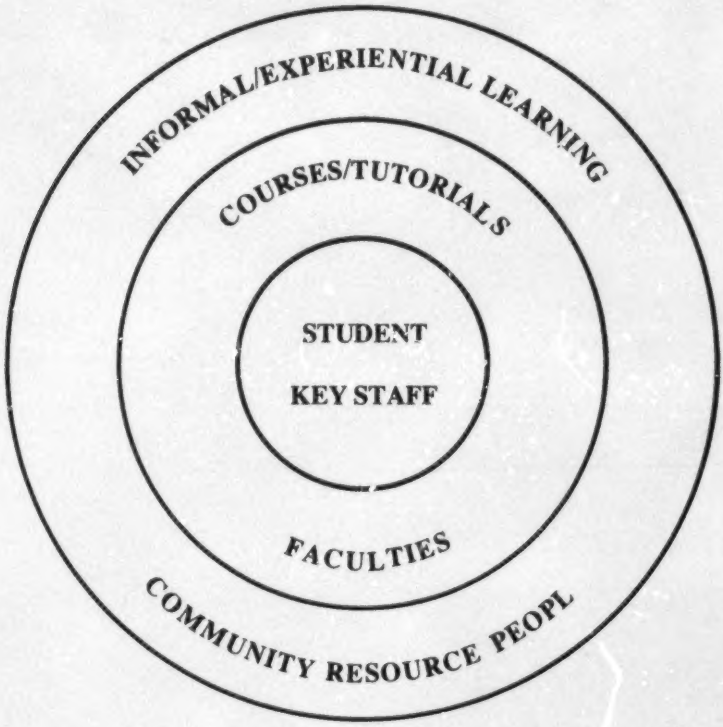
Adult students as a *group* are remarkably diverse. We encounter differences in their life situations and ages at which they enter programs, their styles of learning, their background experiences, their learning agendas, and the number and complexity of roles which they simultaneously engage in. Adult students as *individuals* are also diverse. As individuals they are likely to be exploring the ramifications of recent, past or future life events. They often display several styles of learning, draw on diverse background experiences, have multiple learning agendas, and are operating at a high level of role complexity. In a dynamically organized curriculum, students should find enough flexibility to support their diversity in a way that allows them to work with program staff to design a program to meet their needs.

Adult students *do* display important commonalities. They are often present-oriented in their educational agendas. Many, although not all, have a vocationally-oriented educational agenda. They are aware of their role complexities. They are aware of their role changes whether or not they have a sense of personal change.

The Core Learning Process

The settings in which learning occurs are not restricted to classrooms or meetings with mentors. Our programs recognize and legitimize a wide variety of settings, both formal and nonformal. These settings for learning are

depicted in the diagram below as concentric circles, with the core of the curriculum at the center and nonformal, factual and community resources on the periphery.



As we see it the core learning process has six qualities. These qualities are essential in the relationship between key staff and students, and diminish in importance in peripheral settings:

(a) The core process values the diversity of the students and their complexity.

(b) The core process creates a community of trust for exploring educational goals, new factual knowledge, and perspective transformations.

(c) This community is based on shared leadership.

(d) The community promotes a sense of competence on the part of its members.

(e) The core experience promotes an integration of practical experience with academic knowledge. It promotes an awareness of the relationship between the personal experience of development and the theories that apply to that process.

(f) In the core, the learning activities and developmental processes of the students are constantly monitored in an effort to provide the best match between the two.

The boundaries between the core and the periphery need to be flexible and easily crossed by students in their efforts to organize the most appropriate learning experience for their needs.

Curriculum Models of the Four Programs

Each of the four programs has a different model. At Loretto Heights College, Project Transition is a four-month seminar designed as introductory work prior to career change or enrolling in a degree program in the University Without Walls. Clark University's Learning Support Seminar is a seminar sequence which is combined with an individual portfolio project. The seminars are offered within the College of Professional and Continuing Education; they can be taken independently or as part of a degree program. The External Degree Program at the Vermont State Colleges and also Mary Baldwin College's Adult Degree Program are primarily individualized and alternative routes to the Bachelor of Arts degree. The Vermont State Colleges program adds the complexity of multi-institutional cooperation over a large geographic area in a rural state. In keeping, then, with the assumptions about curriculum, each program has designed its own curriculum to mesh appropriately with other aspects of the institution of which they are a part. The following illustrates these general principles with more specific applications.

Project Transition, *at Loretto Heights College in the University Without Walls: a group experience focused on central issues of "lifetime learning."*

The content of our Project Transition seminars was originally generated by hypothesis, based to some extent on our experiences. At present, the curriculum of Project Transition includes four seminars:

***The Psychology of Adulthood** – introducing a variety of models for understanding the human life cycle from young adulthood through the aging process, and examining recent studies of important transitions of adulthood;*

***Values in Adult Experience** – exploring alternative systems of values, their philosophical and ethical roots, and processes by which values can be clarified so as to support responsible action;*

***Perspectives on the Future** – probing new methods of projecting and preparing for emerging social and political trends, examining studies of the "limits to growth" and issues of resource allocation, and the implications of emerging trends in the labor market.*

***Learning as Adults** – assessing, on the basis of experiences in the three previous seminars, each individual's most comfortable and productive learning style, and exploring through reflection and reading the particular dynamics and challenges of self-initiated learning.*

We knew that adult development literature was meaningful to many mid-life students, and that Gail Sheehy's book, Passages, *was available as a very readable introduction to that literature. We had also developed an interesting collection of articles on adult learning which revealed the nucleus for the adult development seminar. The seminars on values and perspectives on the future represented areas of personal interest that also had the potential to enrich the process of career development.*

At the same time that we were acting on assumptions about the needs

of students, we developed several instruments to provide feedback on the curriculum as it evolved. A brief form distributed at the end of each seminar asks the students to comment, anonymously, on what they learned in the seminar, what they liked about it, and how the seminar might be improved. A more detailed evaluation is acquired at the end of each four-month Project Transition cycle, in a taped group interview. Each of the groups is asked to discuss the following, open-ended statements:

Being adult is . . .
What I most need to learn is . . .
My expectations of Project Transition were . . .
What I valued about the experience was . . .
What might be done differently is . . .

These tapes are transcribed, and their content analyzed for recurrent themes by a group of Project staff members and consultants. This analysis suggests areas of the curriculum which should be continued or modified.

Finally, a needs assessment form has been designed to solicit data on the interests of prospective students in Project Transition. We are especially interested in knowing about issues of concern to persons living in a particular community, or employed in a particular setting, which might serve as the subject for one of the Project Transition seminars.

This approach to developing curriculum reflects several assumptions about adult learning. We are, first of all, trying not to "teach," but to facilitate learning. We are just as anxious to develop studies with, rather than for, adult learners in seminar groups as much as we do this with individual UWW students.

Second, we are trying to foster what Robert Butler calls "lifetime learning"; that is, learning about and throughout the human life cycle. In lifetime learning we see a new and exciting approach to liberal studies, and a way through a dilemma common to adult external degree programs. For several years we have struggled with the problem of encouraging adults to learn in areas broader than their immediate vocations, and yet not prescribe for them subjects in which they have no intrinsic interest. When our seminars are focused on topics common to adult experience, it seems that adults can be helped to grow in the capacity to think more broadly and critically – to become more free intellectually – while still maintaining relevance to the concerns of their lives. One student last semester commented in the final, taped session: "For years all my friends and most of my acquaintances have been in the field of law enforcement. One of the great benefits of this group has been simply to open me up to new points of view." Often students can be helped to read more critically by discussing the design and populations of particular research studies; Passages *is a good tool for that kind of reflection.*

Finally, in our curriculum development we are trying to learn more about the timing and sequence of critical life events. That is the reason for our question, "What I need to learn most is . . ." in the format of the final session. Who expresses a need to learn what, and when? It seems,

for example, that learning about death and dying is an important need in our culture. But, to use Robert Havighurst's term, what is the "teachable moment" when it comes to the issue of death? And, similarly, with parenting. Is the best time to learn about dying or parenting when we are in the midst of encounters with dying or parenting, or long before we are existentially involved, or when the issue begins to appear imminent? One of the most important research subjects in lifetime learning would appear to be identifying which issues become "developmental tasks" (Havighurst's term for an issue one is "required and ready to learn"), and when.

One of the issues our Project Transition students have consistently identified as a developmental task important to mid-life is valuing; that is, identifying and assigning priority to one's values in order to make effective decisions on the basis of those values. In the midst of many roles, adults can lose track of their own priorities. Frequent references to this issue in the final tapes have corroborated our decision to include a seminar on valuing in the Project Transition curriculum.

In the process of facilitating Project Transition seminars and the career planning process, we have tried to pay attention to the same principles followed in developing content for the curriculum. We try to facilitate learning rather than simply impart information, to support lifetime learning about and throughout the life cycle, and to utilize those more teachable moments when adults are likely to find themselves ready to address particular developmental tasks.

Learning Support Project, *at Clark University in the College of Professional and Continuing Education: as seminar activities evolve, successive phases of inquiry are evident in individuals and in the group.*

The seminars in the Learning Support Project are designed to assist individuals in conceptually restructuring reality, and to provide solidarity and support for that reconstruction.

As a group in the seminars, students explore various perspectives for understanding their life experiences. They also explore the disciplines of the university for the purpose of integrating a focused experience with an academic frame of inquiry. As individuals, they develop a portfolio project with the support of the seminar members and the guidance of their mentor.

The seminars provide the base upon which to build the portfolio, and they in turn become a forum in which students can present their completed work.

Our seminar activities are outlined in the center column below. Statements that characterize individuals' changing perspectives of self and the task appear in the left column; characteristics of the group appear in the right column. This progression repeats itself in most seminars. (See Table 1, following.)

Table 1. Learning Support Project at Clark University

Individual Perspectives	Seminar Activities	Group Process
"I am not sure that I know anything that would make a valid portfolio." (Downplaying one's own experience and knowledge.)	Three-Person Introduction (explores communication and sense of support team).	Group is an aggregation — formal distance.
	Introductions Expanded (builds teams, leads to autobiography).	Individuals test relationships.
"I have found a good question, but I don't know if I can do it." (Student is uncertain regarding personal competence.)	Learning Style Inventory (explores alternative ways of knowing and acting).	Small friendship dyads and triads form.
	Life Story Highs and Lows (outlines episodes, leads to initial generalizations about themes and life patterns).	Dyads and triads become support teams for group activities.
"I have several good questions, how can I deal with them all?" (Student has a global, unfocused approach to problems.)	Autobiography (major writing — develops themes for portfolio).	
"I have decided to do this one question. It will be good, and I can do it, but it is unique and personal. No one else will understand or be interested, but it is important to me and I will do it." (Student has a focus and personal investment in the portfolio's question, but there is loneliness and lack of confirmation.)	Group Sorting of Projective Pictures and Analysis of Objects (explores the nature of knowledge and knowing, also induction and the cultural organization of knowledge).	As teams develop, individuals discover they are not unique in their perceptions of themselves as engaged in a struggle.
	Analysis of Autobiography (explores scope, focus, uses of data, induction and deduction).	
	Career Wheel (assesses areas of knowledge and experience).	As teams gain strength, individuals perceive that they can be effective in using the resources of others, but they are not sure that they can reciprocate.
	Students Present Potential Portfolio Topics to Group.	
	Free Writing Exercise (students write the introduction to their portfolios).	
	Helper-Helpee Interviews (to develop portfolio).	
"Others are interested in what I am doing. My work has meaning for them. Their suggestions are helpful and they are using my ideas." (Student finds consensual validation.)	Students Establish Mentor Relationship.	
	Students Begin Literature Search.	
	Teams are Structured to Support Writing of Portfolio.	
	Students Present Portfolio to Group.	Individuals become a resource for others.
	(Seminar Leaders have their own support group, and meet weekly to decide on the timing for each activity.)	

Adult Degree Program, *at Mary Baldwin College: an individually designed degree program using the resources of the college, student and community.*

Based on the assumption that programs for adults should provide an opportunity for students to gain new experiences and to question or re-examine existing habits of action and thought, the Mary Baldwin College curriculum provides the freedom and flexibility to allow for individualized decision-making. The liberal arts curriculum is organized into five coherent, integrated divisions:

I. Arts and Humanities
II. Social Sciences and Historical Studies
III. Natural and Theoretical Sciences
IV. Professional Training and Experiential Learning
V. Interdisciplinary Studies

From these five divisions, the adult student designs a degree program that best meets her career and life goals. The relationship of the faculty advisor and adult student provides the arena in which these choices are made. The student develops a program consisting of various learning experiences such as classroom work, tutorial sessions and independent studies to take advantage of the broad range of content areas. The student develops this program through research, study, decision making, establishing priorities and questioning her own needs and goals, until she is ready to present the degree plan to a committee of the faculty for discussion and approval. Because of the individualized plan, maximum opportunity is provided for students to integrate past experiences into this degree planning process and design new and exciting courses of study.

In its function of providing support services to ADP students, the Women's Center of Mary Baldwin College offers a seminar on life experience reflection and planning which serves as a learning and personal support group for ADP students through individual discussions, group orientation and workshop sessions.

Vermont State Colleges External Degree Program, *a multi-institutional cooperative program: students and mentors design degree programs within a framework of knowledge area requirements and methodological requirements.*

The curriculum of the Vermont State College's External Degree Program is designed to allow for developmental change – when possible. We do not believe that a particular content emphasis is likely to promote change. Rather, we assume that we must create a learning environment and design learning activities which provide both support and tension.

Because an objective of the External Degree Program is to provide study opportunities in response to student purposes, interests, and needs, the External Degree Program does not have a prescribed curriculum but has instead identified four broad areas of integrated knowledge. Within each area it is expected that with assistance, the individual student will design a substantive instructional plan that may be entirely unique to that person. Individual programs of study,

including concentration and general learning, may be drawn from one or more of these comprehensive areas. In order to develop a more eclectic approach to knowledge, students are required to complete a minimum of six credit hours in each of the four integrated knowledge areas and to use each mode of inquiry a minimum of one time throughout the degree plan.

Integrated Knowledge Requirements

Individual and Human Relationships: *Studies with a focus on understanding self and interpersonal communication.*

Society and Social Relationships: *Studies with a focus on social problems, governmental practices.*

Environmental and World Relationships: *Studies with a focus on science and worldwide economic and resource problems.*

Universal and Philosophical Relationships: *Studies with a focus on larger meanings, symbolic systems and aesthetic experiences.*

The Modes of Inquiry Requirements

Critical Analysis: *Students develop a project which indicates analytical skills used in critical review either of opinions or theories.*

Comparative Study: *Students demonstrate the ability to compare and contrast opposing theories or conceptual frameworks.*

Advocacy Positions: *Students prepare a project which demonstrates the ability to synthesize information and to clearly argue from the point of view of an advocate.*

Observation and Reflective Methods: *Students prepare a project based on firsthand observations, then reflect on that experience with an evaluative focus.*

Each individual student writes his or her own degree program within the curriculum requirements. These requirements include a minimum of one-half of the work in the liberal arts. Many students enter the external program for purely instrumental reasons. They wish to acquire a credential or to gain new skills. The program is flexible enough to accommodate some skill acquisition but the structure and goals preclude a vocational training program. For many students, these requirements are a burden, especially for those who desire an immediate job change or "to make more money." Although we believe that broader skills, such as analysis and non-prejudicial decision making are important career skills, students seldom recognize the utility of this learning. They believe that applied skills are salable, reasoning skills are not. Mentors struggle to keep these students in the program. We have concluded that the felt *needs of students can be both a powerful motivator and a powerful distractor.*

The Importance of Program Staff

Programs for adults require personnel who have particular sensitivities to adults or are in the process of developing such abilities and predilections. Staff members themselves also need to be lifelong learners who have taken the intellectual and emotional risks involved in perspective transformation, and have some understanding of the deeper progressions in intellectual and

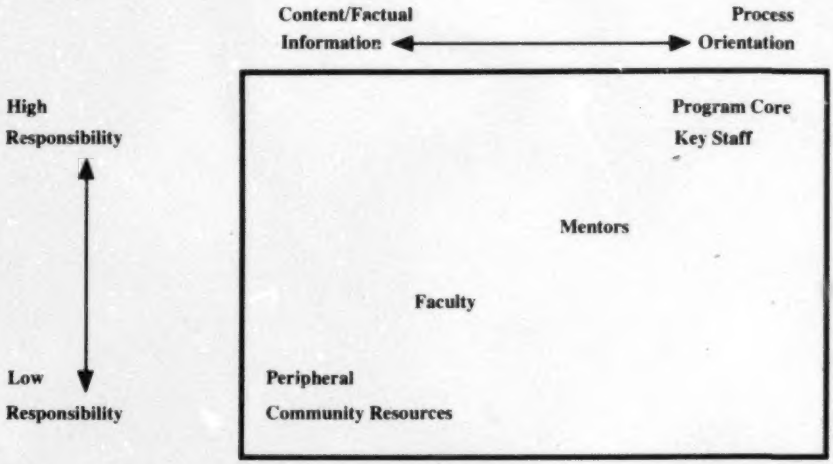
personal growth. Key staff members *must* have philosophical and pedagogical congruence with the goals of the program. They must staff the core activities, while people with less congruence can staff the peripheral activities if they are coordinated by the key staff. A short term goal is to establish the program with the key staff. The long term goal is to entice some of the peripheral staff to move into key positions as a result of their deepening understanding of the program's goals and their experience with a learning process for adult students.

There is a need for role diversity among program staff. Key staff must usually be capable of performing several roles such as academic advisor, tutor or mentor in relation to students. Peripheral staff may occupy more specialized roles. This is represented as follows: (See Table 2, following.)

On this chart, responsibility for the program's learning process increases as we move diagonally from left to right. Faculty external to the program staff usually begin as information resources, and their experience with the program promotes movement into process-oriented positions in relation to students. When we begin a program we must make decisions about where individuals can be placed on this continuum.

The following describes how staffing needs were fulfilled by the four programs.

Table 2



Project Transition, *at Loretto Heights College in the University Without Walls: flexible staffing with role diversity.*

In Project Transition, we believe that it is critical in programs for adults that staff and faculty be selected appropriately. Academic preparation is important, yet those who are well trained in and devoted to specific academic disciplines may not always be the best ones to involve in key roles in adult programs. Above all, it is imperative that individuals participate in innovative programs out of an intrinsic

interest in the program's processes and objectives, and not for reasons of personal opportunism or because they have been required to do so. For example, the generalist needs to have primary interests in human development. Clinical and other counseling skills are also assets. It is important that the program be staffed with people possessing both general and specific expertise. Specialists can be utilized to serve specific counseling and instructional needs. Interdisciplinary orientation is helpful, since many adult learners need to integrate their understanding of themselves and their world.

The goals of staffing should be to provide role models, potential mentors and peer relationships for adult learners, while maintaining standards of intellectual rigor and excellence. A "teacher as learner" attitude must prevail and a spirit of mutuality and equality must characterize the whole enterprise.

Learning Support Project, *at Clark University in the College of Professional and Continuing Education: seminar leaders and mentors play complementary roles.*

The core staff of the Learning Support Project are the seminar leaders who are drawn from the faculty of Clark University and College of Professional and Continuing Education. They share a common set of values in support of each individual's unique path to knowing. They are committed to enabling students to become authorities on their own experience by allowing them to speak their own voices, using concepts from the traditional academic disciplines.

Mentors become involved in the project at the student's initiation. At the beginning of the project, all mentors were outside resources to the program. However, over the past three years several mentors with repeated student contacts have begun to work more closely with the seminar leaders. In addition to this, seven faculty members have begun to develop a set of subject area clusters that will relate sequentially to the project seminars. Topics for these new subject area clusters are being adopted from student portfolio projects.

Adult Degree Program, *at Mary Baldwin College: faculty play key roles.*

The Mary Baldwin Adult Degree Program was designed by a group of faculty members and the Program Director was chosen from the faculty. During the first year of operation, the Adult Degree Program included a staff of one full-time director and secretary plus part-time faculty advisors and tutors (drawn from the existing college faculty), and the Director of the Women's Center who provided support services to returning women on a part-time basis. An additional full-time tenure-track faculty member has been added in the second program year as an academic counselor or mentor. Additional ADP staff will be added as enrollment increases.

College faculty members will continue to advise and/or tutor students and receive compensation for this role, or faculty members will elect to work with Adult Degree Program students as part of their full-time teaching load. These contracts will be negotiated on an individual basis by the faculty person, Dean of the College, and ADP Director.

Vermont State Colleges External Degree Program, *a multi-institutional cooperative program: mentors work with individual students to design learning contracts.*

The staffing pattern of the Vermont State College's External Degree Program specifically incorporates development as the central aim of education. The educational methodology of the learning contract and the self-designed degree program give the flexibility required to meet this aim. Of particular importance is the faculty mentor. The mentor guides and facilitates the adult student's learning through a system of negotiations. The mentors initially try to determine where the students are, and then help design learning opportunities which will contain optimal incongruities. They encourage students to study topics relevant to the particular tasks and events of their life cycle. Within these topics, they challenge students to take risks and strive for new understanding. Support for this difficult and threatening process comes from a strong mentor/student relationship.

In the next year we plan to increase our capabilities for intervention. We hope to develop an instrument which will help us focus on each individual stage of development. In addition, we hope to design prototypical contracts that lead to perspective transformation.

III. Adult Development

These programs were funded primarily because of their vision of adults as students. We also expressed deep curiosity about the processes of adult development which are fostered by the curriculum and reflected in the life events which bring adults to our programs. In an effort to clarify our vision and to understand more completely its implications, we examined some of the recent research and theory regarding patterns of growth and development in adulthood, and interviewed students as part of an ongoing process of formative program evaluation. This chapter presents a summary of the major outlines of our discussion.

Enrollment and Adult Change

Among program staff, there was already a conviction, nurtured by and expressive of the experience of teaching adults, that adults frequently enrolled in educational programs at times which have particular personal significance for them. These times we came to label as times of transition or times of transformation.

Expressed reasons for becoming involved in structured learning experiences have a wide range. One student enrolled to learn "that I am not alone in

my conflict,"* another because, "I was faced with days of boredom unless I developed some marketable skills or engaged in intellectual pursuit," and still another declares, "I . . . have some deep thoughts on life in general and welcome the opportunity to clarify them."

Growth in adulthood is characterized by periods of relative stability and periods of change. When adults enroll they are sometimes seeking a way out of what appears to be a pervasive sense of boredom, or stagnation, or simply a hint that things could be different.

> *I was feeling somewhat stagnated and just grasped it (the program) as an opportunity to continue my education and possibly to learn just where I'm going.*

Adult students also enroll at times when they are experiencing startling changes in their lives. Through specially designed programs, institutions can provide adults with a support structure, a consciousness-raising experience, or significant new skills. In short, whether enrollment is prompted by felt change or whether it creates this potential, we perceive a need for institutions to be responsive to the special case of the adult who is seeking or experiencing change.

Dimensions of Adult Development: Transition and Transformation

Adult change has many different dimensions. Some research about adults basically describes *transitional* changes. Examples of books which examine transitional change are Levinson's, *The Seasons of a Man's Life* (1978), Gould's *Transformations* (1978), Neugarten's *Middle Age and Aging* (1968), and Sheehy's *Passages* (1976). Transitions come about as people cope with successive tasks of the adult life cycle such as leaving home, marrying, child rearing, establishing or changing careers, coping with divorce or loss, adjusting as children leave home, and retiring. As adults traverse the life cycle, such marker events often cause a rethinking or restructuring of their lives. Often such events or periods of time prompt adults to seek an educational setting. One pervasive example is women's experience as children grow:

> *We have just one child left at home so everything just seemed to be the right time for me (. . . to return to school) . . . though my home and husband and children are important to me, I felt that I did not want this type of life where I stayed home all day and did nothing (satisfying) . . .*

Or as another woman put it: "Now that I've done things for my husband and for the two boys, . . . *now* I want to do some things for me."

Such transitions may portend profound restructuring of experience along dimensions which can be described as *transformational*, dimensions which involve a change in one's views of the world, of self, and of relations with others. Researchers such as Jane Loevinger in *Ego Development: Conceptions and Theories* (1976), Lawrence Kohlberg, in "Stage and Sequence: The Cognitive Developmental Approach to Socialization" (1969), William Perry in *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Years* (1968),

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**All quotes are from program students who were interviewed as part of an on-going process of formative evaluation and to provide a means of generating data for Network discussions and meetings.*

and Robert Kegan, in "The Evolving Self," *Journal of Counseling Psychology* (August, 1979), have described such transformations in terms of developmental stages. It became a task for program staff to examine students' experiences in the program based on a deeper understanding of this research. Collectively, we examined case studies of students and looked for ways to describe their expectations and the impact of study upon their lives. We found applications of this research, as is illustrated by the following working paper prepared for a network meeting.*

How do people's ways of knowing *themselves and their worlds change? What are the* formal *aspects of various ways of knowing, which underlie thematic or transitional aspects? If there are qualitative differences among the ways in which people answer the questions, "How do I know?" and "How do I value, or choose?," what do we hope for as educators concerned with self-direction? What encourages progress from one way of understanding to another? What are special concerns of students who are adults, and how can we take them into account?*

My questions proceed from being a student of Piaget, Kohlberg, Perry, and Kegan. As I have worked in the Learning Support Project, first consulting and later leading a seminar, I have found Bob Kegan's and Bill Perry's interpretations most helpful. Since application of cognitive developmental theory is only beginning to be brought to personality theory and few have dealt with adolescence, much less adulthood, what follows, then, must be seen as speculative.

If in developmental processes (from children learning to conserve volume to adults becoming able to do a portfolio) we see "increasing differentiation and hierarchic integration," how are the changes played out in the ways people see themselves and the world? Erikson says that each successive developmental crisis is a reworking of identity, and this seems akin to what Piaget is talking about as successive decentrations between Self and Other. In other words, there may be fresh knowledge of who I am with each fresh objectification of myself and my relations to my needs, to others, to my roles and standards (See Table 3).

Kegan makes the point that while crisis is sometimes the opportunity for development, very often development is the opportunity for crisis. The qualitatively different confusions at each level may provide the setting for a sense of personal change which can prompt enrollment in adult degree programs or even arise out of the experience of the program itself. Kegan's contribution is a picture of what the developmental crisis or question might be at different points along the way. I'll try to summarize that view.

In Piaget's view, the person differentiates the self from the world again and again. Kegan has applied this notion to stage transition: What is indiscriminate from the "Self" at one level is detached and recognized as "Other" at the next level. But the inadequacy of the

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**We include this as an example of the kind of discussions undertaken. This piece was prepared for an early network meeting, and illustrates ideas which were subsequently examined in case studies of students' experiences.*

Table 3

Kohlberg:	Loevinger:	Perry:	Kegan:
Moral Judgment Stage	**Ego Level/Cognitive Style**	**Position/Construction of Knowledge**	**Self/Other**
Stage 2 Instrumental Hedonism **(Meet one's own needs and occasionally other's needs)**	Self-Protective **Stereotyping, Confusion**	Dualism **External Authority is the Source of Truth and value**	**"I *am* my Needs"**
Stage 3 Good Relations **(Orientation to approval and to pleasing and helping others)**	**3** Conformist **Conceptual simplicity, stereotypes, clichés**	Multiplicity Prelegitimate **Confusion exists but Authority has the Answer**	**"I *have* my needs. I *am* my Relationships."**
Stage 4 Law and Order **(The Letter, not the Spirit of the Law)**	**3/4** Self-Aware, or Conscientious-Conformist	Multiplicity **In some realms, Authority "hasn't found the Answer yet."**	**"I *have* my relationships. I *am* my Roles and Standards."**
Stage 5 Democratic Contract **(the Spirit of the Law)**	**4** Conscientious **Conceptual complexity, idea of patterning**	Relativism **Knowledge is Contextual; Truth & Value differ according to context.**	**"I *have* my standards and roles."**
	5 Autonomous **Increased conceptual complexity, toleration for ambiguity, broad scope, objectivity**	Commitment in Relativism **Taking a stand in the midst of Relativism. "I must be my own Authority."**	**"How do I** balance **my needs, relationships, roles, and standards?"**

current view may feel like a very real threat to the known self. This loss of the old self can be a painful process. Kegan's admonition to developmental educators is to take care in providing the support as well as the stimulating situations for transition.

At the Self-Protective level, then, a person would confuse satisfaction of his or her needs with safety for oneself. Issues and questions would be seen in stereotypical right/wrong, good/bad, either/or terms. And the locus of authority in matters of truth or values would be some External Authority, to which the person must adhere or suffer the consequences. When needs are not met, and the necessity for progressing beyond the marketplace orientation of "you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours," is clear, the time becomes ripe for seeing that "I have (rather than I am) my needs, and if they are not met I will still continue as my self."

In an educational setting, the person who needs the Authority to tell the truth, and give him or her the answers may experience great frustration when we ask him or her to clarify values or decide what idea has merit and why.

Persons at the next level identify Self with important affiliations, judging on the basis of peer approval and seeing the world in the ways their "important others" dictate. There may be differences of opinion on questions, but if one looks hard enough, an outside Expert will have the solution. When loss or change in relationships threatens this sytem of operation and understanding, and the common sense clichés give out, a person may come to the fresh and more objective sense that "I have my relationships." The locus of authority and decision no longer resides in powerful affiliations; instead, the Self is recognized as inescapably lonely.

Having progressed to a sense of self in the world of roles and standards, concrete obligations and duties, the person at the Self-Aware level confuses his or her own identity with those roles and obligations. Questions of truth and value are resolved by the Rules and Law, and exceptions will be taken care of in a matter of time. One's identity is confounded with one's roles (as spouse, worker, relative) in conventional social niches as current received opinion defines them. This way of understanding oneself and the world may fail and lead to self-disintegration when the job is lost or the standards fatally betrayed. Then the question becomes whether the person can go on to say, "I have my roles, my standards – and if they are lost, it does not mean I, myself, am lost." The vicious cycle of perfectionism and self-defeat familiar to many students seems a likely hazard during this transition.

At the Conscientious level, a person sees standards and values as individual and contextual; thus issues are viewed as complex and solutions might be found in personal rights or democratically agreed-upon laws. There is no absolute executive who can hand out the Right answer; rather, justice must be sought for each situation, honoring each person's rights, and serving the utilitarian principle of "the greatest good for the greatest number." This may feel like shifting sands when some personal commitment is required in a situation of conflict between equally legitimate claims. Then one must take the further step of committing oneself to a particular style or philosophy in the midst of various equally legitimate possibilities. Beyond simply writing an exposition of different ways to understand the Civil War, for example, a student must be able to give her own interpretation and show its relation to those other approaches. The person can now say "I am my own authority." When a student can say this, self-direction is the order of the day, not a problem.

How do these progressions apply to adult students? In our project each seminar group is made up of adults who view themselves and the world differently. A developmental framework like the one outlined above enables us to appreciate that diversity so that we can effectively listen and speak to each member. It also helps us organize group activities and individual assignments. The significant contact between seminar leader, other staff and each student is aided by such a perspective. For example, with a student who thinks in conformist terms

the seminar leader and mentor must establish and work through a strong interpersonal alliance which provides a supportive, yet firm structure for the inevitable intellectual and emotional challenges to that mode of thinking. On the other hand, a student at the Conscientious level must be engaged in a lively critical conversation which challenges clarity of interpretation and commitment.

Many of our activities split the group into dyads or triads. Arranging these for an "optimal mix" between people with discrepant world views fosters constructive conflict or challenge. It also places peer teaching responsibilities on the students. These activities must be balanced with groupings which provide for ready sympathy and support. The challenges for individual thinking which diversity provides must be complemented by felt support and solidarity. Understanding group members in developmental terms allows the leader to be sensitive to dynamics of challenge and support which foster perspective transformation.

–Rebecca Hanson Formisano

Facilitating Adult Development

As we come to understand the different world views that are described in developmental theory, it also becomes clearer that the *processes* of both transitional and transformational change have much in common. Change evolves out of felt discrepancies or incongruities which demand attention. The attempt to grasp the confusion, frequently accompanied with considerable struggle, pain, anxiety or stress, often prompts courageous risk-taking as the person reaches toward a new perspective.

Again, Mezirow's (1978) definition of perspective transformation was the term we used to describe the magnitude of change which sometimes occurs.

> *When a meaning perspective can no longer comfortably deal with anomalies in a new situation, a transformation can occur. . . . It is not simply role taking . . . it implies a conscious recognition of the difference between one's old viewpoint and the new one and a decision to appropriate the newer perspective as being of more value.*

This new meaning perspective "has dimensions of thought, feeling, and will." And with this we have a broader view of the ultimate purposes of a liberal education for adults:

> *Maturity may be seen as a developmental process of movement through the adult years toward meaning perspectives that are progressively more inclusive, discriminating and more integrative of experience. In ascending this gradient toward fuller maturity, we move, if we can, toward perspectives that are more universal and better able to deal with abstract relationships, that more clearly identify psychocultural assumptions shaping our actions and causing our needs, that provide criteria for more principled value judgments, enhance our sense of agency or control and give us a clearer meaning and sense of direction in our lives.*

With knowledge of these patterns and theories, each program moved toward articulating the assumptions about facilitating adult development

which had shaped the design of the program. The descriptions which follow illustrate how the assumptions held about growth in adulthood, the tasks of adulthood and the role of learning in relation to these tasks, shape and inform educational practice.

Project Transition, *at Loretto Heights College in the University Without Walls: a setting where each individual plays an active role in assessing his or her own needs.*

In Project Transition we try to foster an atmosphere in which adult learners will find support to address the challenges and transitions inherent in adult life. We don't concentrate on the creation *of challenges per se.*

Many of our students are women who come to us as they try to risk confronting the challenge of the unknown. They often have been wives and mothers, primarily, attuned essentially to meeting the needs of others. Now they are trying to become more initiating and to take action on the basis of their own needs. To establish challenging circumstances for such individuals in the sense of giving them directions might serve to deepen their dependencies.

The elements of challenge in Project Transition derive partly from ideas encountered in our readings, partly from discussions in the seminars, and partly from each student's own impetus to change. The ideas encountered in books such as Passages *and* Future Shock *are discussed in class. Students are asked to write commentaries on material they find of personal significance. These materials are shared in the seminars. No one is compelled to address material with which she is not ready to deal, but the invitation to take seriously such concepts as "the caregiver wife" is there.*

Personal career exploration is organized through learning contracts which specify objectives, activities, resources, and an evaluation plan. Again, each student creates her own learning contract, although advice and encouragement from the faculty and consultants are available.

Project Transition provides opportunities for working and studying alone, in one-to-one relationships with the project faculty and consultants, and in small groups. Each adult student needs and uses these methods of learning to varying degrees. Diversity of methodology helps to provide opportunities for both challenge and support, as needed by each student.

One critical difference in adult learners is between those who want and/or need external structure and those who don't. The difference sometimes has become apparent during discussions of medical ethics. Some students are comfortable searching through the ambiguities of a case while others are interested only in answers. Our approach to students who seek direction is to take note of their apparent need, and proceed from there. We have chosen not to emphasize testing students' developmental levels, but simply to try to relate to them as individuals who cope in different ways with the burden of human freedom. In our relationships with learners we do pay attention to and draw insight from various theories of adult transitions and ego development.

In Project Transition we assume that each individual should play an active role in the assessment of his/her own needs. While our experience

suggests that most adults could benefit from studying adult developmental and value issues, we don't force individuals into our curriculum by categorically requiring them to participate in Project Transition prior to applying to or enrolling in the University Without Walls Program. Some adults study simply to be socialized and they have the right to do so. We do suggest Project Transition to UWW applicants who are less certain of their direction and offer it as an alternative way to re-enter college.

At the same time, we recognize that it is difficult to complete a significant learning experience without changing as a person. In a sense, education implies that one will change. Project Transition was developed partly in response to our recognition that adults do change through their learning, and that such change can be disruptive to family relationships and working lives. Project Transition exists, in part, to provide a support system for individuals experiencing such changes. It is an alternative beginning to the highly challenging process of co-designing one's own entire baccalaureate degree program as is required in UWW.

In Project Transition we believe that the aims of education for adults must include the classical aims of liberal learning: freeing the human mind and spirit, vocational aims, and personal aims. It is the learner, in collaboration with the institution and its faculty, who determines how these aims will be addressed.

Learning Support Project, *at Clark University's College of Professional and Continuing Education: a setting for support and challenge through successive phases of inquiry.*

The Learning Support Project was created to provide adult students with a forum for reflective analysis through which they could integrate personal life experiences with academic frames of inquiry. The Learning Support Project is attempting to create a support network for adults engaged in perspective transformation. Mezirow suggests that in this process individuals move through a transformation cycle with the three phases mentioned below. At whatever level, these phases seem common to students as they engage in the act of inquiring about their life experiences within a disciplined framework of study.

1. ***Alienation from prescribed roles.***

2. ***Reframing or restructuring one's conception of reality and one's place in it*** *(redefinition of problems and the need for action; new criteria for assigning values and making judgments; recognition of the possibility of effecting change through one's own initiative).*

3. ***Contractual solidarity*** (participation in society based on the reconstructed perspective of reality).

Individuals seem to come to our seminars during, or as a consequence of the first phase. The seminars in the project are principally concerned with support in phases two and three as Mezirow says,

> *"Self confidence needed for perspective transformation is often gained through an increased sense of competency and through a supportive social climate in which provisional tries are encouraged with minimum risks."*

The seminars are designed to help individuals in conceptually restructuring reality, and to provide solidarity and support for that reconstruction.

Adult Degree Program, *at Mary Baldwin College: an individualized opportunity for professional advancement and intellectual achievement.*

Students enrolled in the Adult Degree Program at Mary Baldwin College are characterized by two predominant orientations which reflect the nature of the changes they are seeking or experiencing in their lives. The desire for professional advancement and attention to career planning generally figure significantly in the long-range goals of many Adult Degree Program students. Fifty-seven percent of our students are employed full time. Some see no further opportunities for growth in their present work settings and are seeking new competencies and certification as ways to change the situation. Others are considering a wider range of professional possibilities and view their educational experiences as a way to expand their options. A second major orientation to learning among Adult Degree Program students is a high cognitive interest. It is important to point out that these two orientations – professional advancement and cognitive interest – are not mutually exclusive as motivating factors; rather, they often exist interdependently. Given the nature of Mary Baldwin College, with its emphasis on the liberal arts and academic achievement, it is understandable that students with the learning orientation would be attracted to an institution of this kind.

Many students express a desire to supplement previous educational experiences; they indicate a strong belief in the intrinsic value of learning. This orientation reflects a need to overcome perceived deficiencies and a desire for intellectual development.

Adult Degree Program students exhibit a self-generated interest in their educational ventures. Very few are influenced in any significant way by external expectations – the suggestions, requirements or demands of others. Neither are they motivated by a need to escape from a dull, boring environment. They indicate little interest in the associative or social interaction potential of their learning, and generally seem comfortable as self-directed, independent learners.

A goal of the Adult Degree Program is to provide the environment and support to facilitate adult change and development. The program staff and faculty who work with students do not make systematic attempts to identify, assess and measure the development of individual students. We do find, however, that individuals pursuing their own professional and intellectual goals within the individualized structure of our program find it a useful experience. An in-depth life planning seminar is offered each semester for those students who want an opportunity for this kind of exploration. This past year ten percent of the Adult Degree Program enrollment chose to participate in the seminar.

Vermont State Colleges External Degree Program, *a multi-institutional cooperative program: assumes that development emerges from the interaction of the learner with the environment.*

Given our assumptions, it follows that we can enhance development by careful planning of the learning environment. We have identified two primary ways in which our program makes a conscious effort to promote development: program requirements, and the student-mentor relationship.

Program Requirements *(see details on pp. 18-19).*

Through the Integrated Knowledge Areas *students are expected to view their learning in four different contexts, ranging from the individual and particularistic to the universal and philosophical. We feel that this helps to provide the important knowledge base for contextual and more autonomous ways of knowing and acting.*

The Modes of Inquiry *requirements expect students to carry out studies with conscious attention to how, as well as what, they are learning. By focusing on such modes as "critical analysis," or "advocacy," students not only sharpen process skills, they also become aware of their own, and alternative thought processes – a crucial developmental step.*

By expecting all students to plan their own studies, both at the degree level and at the course level, the program enhances movement away from passive, authoritarian learning toward more active engagement. In addition, by learning a methodology of planning, students gain goal-setting and evaluation skills of considerable value.

***The Mentor-Student Relationship** – this is certainly the most important, and probably the least understood of the program's components.*

Although mentors function as faculty advisors, a relationship with students is often far broader and richer. The main difference is that rather than focusing on curriculum and making recommendations to the students, the mentor focuses on the developmental learning needs of each individual learner. Broadly, these activities include: helping the learner clarify his or her values and establish goals, professional, and academic; analyzing the learning style, developmental stage and other constraints to form a unique diagnostic configuration for each learner; helping the learner develop a degree plan which will best meet institutional requirements and his or her own needs; helping the learner plan individual studies which will best provide the "optimal incongruity" appropriate to perspective transformation; providing regular feedback and support to the learner through individual conferences, correspondence, and regular cluster meetings.

Further information about these programs can be obtained by contacting network members directly. This is a report of programs in process, as the network has not yet completed its work. It is hoped that this monograph will contribute to an ongoing and broader dialogue concerning lifelong learning for adults.

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